



MUSCLEPHARM POWER SPOTLIGHT

BIG BENCHING WITH JAKE PRAZAK

BY JEFF "ROBOT" IRION • PHOTOS BY SPIRIT WIND PHOTOGRAPHY



There is a man who has been tearing up the bench press all-time world records lately, and if you don't know who he is, then it's time you find out! His name is Jake Prazak. He lives in Iowa and he has his own gym called N.I.P. & Fitness Center. Prazak has the 220 All-Time multi-ply world record with a 909 bench press, and he also has a 920 bench press at 242 lbs. He's lifted in some of the biggest meets in the world, and he is always helping

others. Plus, Prazak is raising money for charities to help the less fortunate. Last year, he raised money for a young man with a life-threatening illness at Relentless Detroit 2012. Prazak is also lifting in this year's Relentless 2013 in Minnesota. Let's find out how Prazak trains to break these all-time records so that we can steal his secrets and break his records.

POWER: Where do you train? What meets are you planning on doing next?

PRAZAK: I train at N.I.P. & Fitness

Center in Mason City, Iowa. My next meet is Relentless in Minnesota on March 23 to support the Hope Kids of Minnesota. You can find the gym on Facebook or www.northiafitness.com.

POWER: What type of bench shirt do you wear? How many plies is it? And what do you do training-wise to help you find the groove and break in your shirts?

PRAZAK: I wear three-ply Overkill bench shirts. I usually don't have too much trouble finding my groove with



Overkill shirts because each shirt is custom made to your exact measurements. I perfect the groove one board at a time until I touch.

POWER: What do you do to break in a bench shirt? How do you know if a shirt isn't fitting right, or if it's not performing the way you want it to?

Prazak: The first day in a new Overkill shirt is miserable, but it gets better each session as you and the shirt become one. After four or five sessions, if I feel an adjustment needs to be made, then I will either send it in if something needs to be tightened, or I will stretch it myself if something is too tight.

POWER: What training methods have you used to hit these huge benches?

PRAZAK: My method is simple. If I am strong that day, I will push my body to where I feel extremely uncomfortable. If I have 900 lbs. in mind for a meet, I

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am feeling 1,000 lbs. as many times as I can in the training cycle. If my body says to back off, I do. I listen to my body and nothing else.

POWER: What is the worst advice you have heard when it comes to bench training, and what is the best?

PRAZAK: Worst advice: "You shouldn't train in your shirt so much". I have come to the conclusion that the

people telling me this look for an excuse not to get into their gear weekly. Let's face it: multi-ply gear hurts. If I need a de-load week, it will be in my shirt. Best advice: "You need to live in your shirt." And that's what I do.

POWER: After hitting your first 700-lb. bench, what did it take to get you into the 800- and 900-lb. ranges?

PRAZAK: Living in my shirt week after week for seven years straight, perfecting my form and turning my weak points into my strengths. I am constantly working on my speed and doing accessory exercises that strengthen my bench setup and motion. I traveled all over learning from successful people (Rob Luyando, Rudy Rosales and Bill Carpenter are just a



JAKE PRAZAK

few of the people who have helped me along the way). I do shoulder preventative maintenance every day to try and stay ahead of any problems.

POWER: So living in your shirt week after week has gotten you a 920-lb. bench. How much do you bench raw? 275? Maybe 315?

PRAZAK: I maintain my raw bench between 500 and 550 lbs. My best raw lift in competition is 507 and my best gym raw is 555. I train my raw bench every week to maintain it before I get into my shirt. I train heavy raw because my shoulders are still in good shape and they're my foundation for gear. I like to try and find where my base fails when training raw (basically where my shoulders collapse and elbows flare). This is usually the 600 to 640 range. I enjoy training raw, it just gets very boring to me. Given the choice of laying less than 600 raw or 1,000 equipped, I'll take the 1,000!

POWER: What does a typical week of training look like?

PRAZAK: **Monday:** Lockout/triceps work. Close grip bench to a three-board. I usually do four or five working sets of one to five reps. I also will decline and incline close grip to a three-board for three sets of five reps. If I am going to use bands or chains, this is when I do it. Accessory exercises usually are in the eight to 12-rep range for about four sets.

Tuesday: I alternate heavy squats and deads every other week. I raw squat and dead around 600. Finish with leg accessory work and biceps and forearms. For biceps and forearms, I usually do four exercises, each for four to five sets of 12 to 15 reps.

Wednesday: Back/shoulders. I always start my back workout with 80 to 100 pull-ups, done over four sets with different grips. I then pick five accessories and do four sets of five to 10 reps. Early in the training cycle, I

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will do a heavy compound exercise for my shoulders, usually seated dumbbell presses for four sets of about five reps. Accessory exercises for the rest of the shoulders are done with high reps (15 to 30).

Thursday: Rest

Friday: Bench day. This is an example of one of my workouts:

Bar x 12
135 x 10
225 x 8
315 x 6
405 x 4
475 x 2
535 x 1
605 x 1 (base failure)

715 x 2
805 x 2
895 x 2
945 x 1
1,025 x 1 overload to a two-board
845 x 3 three-board

Early in my training cycle, I stick to two-board double and triples. Seven or eight weeks out, I will duplicate the same numbers to a half to one-board. Three or four weeks out I am touching my opener.

Saturday: Rest

Sunday: HIIT [High Intensity Interval Training]. Tire pulling or elliptical sprints, if the weather is bad.

I do shoulder preventative maintenance work every day: high reps with bands, static stretches, rotator cuff movements.

POWER: Which bench press competitor do you admire and why?

PRAZAK: Scott Nutter. I have known him for many years. Nobody in powerlifting gives back more to the less fortunate than Scott. If I, and everybody else, can give back a small percentage of what Scott does, this world will be a much better place!

POWER: What type of supplements do you use for your training, and do you think it's a must for a beginner to use supplements?

PRAZAK: I eat lots of protein, glucosamine and fish oil. I think it is very important for the beginner. When you beat your body up, you have to give back to it, and it is very hard and expensive to do with just food.

POWER: What are your beliefs on training with bands, chains and the Sling Shot?

PRAZAK: I use bands and chains probably once every few months. I like what they do training-wise, it's just that they put different angles of stress on my forearms. And when my forearms are pissed off, bench night sucks! The Sling Shots in our gym get used a lot. From old to young, everybody can benefit from the Sling Shot. I usually use it for an acclimation set between my last raw and first shirted set, or if my shoulders are acting up.

POWER: What is your goal in powerlifting?

PRAZAK: I want to raise the 242 record and be the lightest ever to bench 1,000. More importantly, I want to continue to use my talent to help kids fighting life-threatening diseases. **PM**